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EDITOR'S NOTES.

PUBLIC MEETING IN MUSIC HALL.

THE first of the proposed series of public meetings, in the interest of the American Unitarian Association, was held in the Music Hall the last Sunday of September. The plan of these meetings is to select for each evening some one department of the work of our Association, hoping thus to give a more clear view of its operations than is possible in our more general statements. In truth, the work of this Association covers a variety of different departments, which, in almost every other large religious denomination, is divided among several different organizations.

The topic for this first meeting was our work at the South. It is the branch on which we have done the least; and yet those who were present at the meeting must have seen, that even here our efforts had not been inconsiderable, while the opportunities are unbounded. We should give a report of the addresses made on the occasion, except that they have received a wide circulation already through our papers. Let us simply state the prominent points presented: —

1. It appeared, that, even in the direction where all seemed agreed that least could be expected, — viz., the attempt to support or plant religious societies of our faith, — considerable had been done. The reason why little can at present be expected in this direction, is obvious. Among the old white residents at the South, no denomination has had so little favor as ours, on account of our consistent and unanimous opposition to slavery, so that we have to meet this old prejudice on every hand; and, among the new element, there is not yet sufficient stability to organize permanent self-supporting churches of our faith. But this is only temporary; and, as evidence of this, there was presented a specimen of correspondence with various parts of the South, making it clear that the bread we cast on waters will return after many days in ample results. Meantime, what Mr. Eliot told in regard to the society at Washington; what Mr. Ware told in regard to that at Wilmington (in both which places the very existence now of their organizations is due to help received from this Association); and what was told of New Orleans and Nashville and Richmond, with all of which the Association has had to do, — formed an interesting record of something already accomplished even in this direction.

2. A line of effort more immediately open before us was set forth in full by Mr. Ware; viz., work in connection with the colored people at the South, and in co-operation with the existing colored churches. Mr. Ware related his experience with influential members of the African Methodist-Episcopal Church. We print elsewhere in this journal a letter to the same purport, from one of the officers in its missionary organization. We have had similar assurances of a willingness to co-operate with us from leading men in the (colored) Baptist denomination. The fact is, that not only are the colored people chiefly engaged now in the

attempt to lift up their race, so that they are eager to make the most of every help they can get in the great opportunity which has just now for the first time been accorded them; but they have little of sectarian prejudice, and are willing to recognize as Christian brethren all in whom they see manifest the spirit of Christ and zeal for his cause.

The work in co-operation with these Church organizations will be chiefly, at present, through the circulation of tracts and other religious reading. Already a most gratifying beginning has been made. The Association has issued several tracts for Freedmen, and has circulated them in every Southern State; and these have received everywhere most cordial welcome. Several other tracts have been prepared or promised; and we hope that before long this series will rank among this class of literature as highly as did our series of Army Tracts during the war.

3. A third direction of effort was that especially illustrated by Mr. Hale; viz., a broad acceptance of whatever opportunity presents itself, in this peculiar emergency, to advance the best interests of a Christian civilization. Mr. Hale, in his address, very impressively set forth the extent of this opportunity, and the responsibility that rests upon us to avail ourselves of it.

It was shown that in this direction also, although our work has been as nothing compared with what it is possible to do, the Association has not been wanting during the last two years.

Rev. Mr. Edes, as our missionary in Georgia, conducted an adult school, preached in colored churches, spoke in their various meetings, and edited a newspaper, which was widely circulated through the State, and whose sole purpose was to scatter loyal words and to educate the sentiment of the people. Rev. Mr. Thurston, our agent in North Carolina did a somewhat similar work, making his labors in connec-

tion with the educational movements of the city and State as prominent an aim as his distinctly religious work, Rev. Mr. Stebbins, in Charleston, dispensing relief with a generous heart and an unwearying hand, exemplifying most nobly the active spirit of Christian charity, made our Association prominent in that city among the philanthropic agencies which the temporary distress invited there. Rev. Mr. De Normandie, in his six-months' work in Richmond, and the other missionaries whom we have employed for shorter periods, have all made this effort outside of regular pulpit ministrations a prominent care. The interesting work of Miss Bradley, in Wilmington, N.C., was especially dwelt upon at the meeting, as an illustration of this kind of service. She went there under the joint direction of the American Unitarian Association and Soldiers'-Memorial Society, a stranger, and was received with prejudice; but she drew around her a large school of poor white children, an adult school, and a Sunday school of a hundred and twenty pupils. Mr. Hale related one incident, as showing the result of her labor, — that, when she came away, she received a petition for her return, actually signed by most of the children of the school; and she had also a similar petition from parents of the children, on which all but sixteen out of the eighty names were indicated *by their mark*, — "the white parents of the children whom she had taught to write being, in that proportion, unable to write their names."

Thus, even in the mere educational work at the South, we, as an Association, have had some part; and when Mr. Eliot, in his remarks, referred to the marvellous report of the Freedmen's Bureau, of the work done by societies in the North, — by which (as an illustration) it appears that, in South Carolina alone, twenty-five thousand persons, who five years ago did not know the alphabet, can now read,

with fair understanding, their newspaper or their Bible," — it was a satisfaction to know, that among these societies we had taken a share.

There are reasons why we as a denomination, and through our own organized agencies, should take up vigorously this kind of work. Other denominations are entering upon it very largely for sectarian purposes; and, by the careful introduction of their doctrines, are trying to make their primers and spelling-books serve the ends of a catechism, and their schools to become nurseries of their own peculiar church. There are noble Freedmen's societies that are wholly unsectarian, but they are coming to be more and more dependent for their support on the Unitarian and other Liberal churches; and just as, during the war, the Sanitary Commission was gradually being deserted by the so-called evangelical portions of our community, who preferred, through the Christian Commission, to serve with their charities the advancement of their sects, so now these unsectarian societies are coming to be more and more dependent for their support on Unitarian and other Liberal churches and individuals. If we could know how large an amount is given by our people to these societies, we should rejoice in the testimony to their interest and their generosity. We would not draw away any thing from these societies; but we would call attention to the amount of sectarian work that is being done by other organizations, which we ought somehow to supplement. To a certain degree, moreover, they are right in making secular and religious instruction go hand in hand; and we hope that the denomination will wake to the importance of this whole work, and strengthen the hands and fill the treasury of this Association, so as to enable them to pursue it with vigor proportioned to the opportunity.

THE NEW SOUTH SOCIETY.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court, in the case of the New South Church property, must have been welcomed with thankfulness by every ecclesiastical body in the land, and by every person interested in religious institutions; and must have inspired everywhere a new confidence in the law as a sacred guardian of all our most precious interests.

The case was exceedingly important, because there are probably many similar ones, that might any day arise under the precedent of it, if the decision had been different.

The valuable church property, made up by the contributions of many generations of worshippers, had, by the change of residence of the population formerly worshipping there, gradually come into the hands of a few. The congregation was small, and pews had been sold at very low prices. But the same change which had made the location unfavorable for church purposes made it very valuable for business; and a majority of the few proprietors felt themselves justified in disposing of the property, and apportioning the proceeds among themselves. The question before the court was whether this could be allowed.

The decision was a clear and distinct exposition of the sacred nature of such trusts; and, while the parties were permitted to sell the church and build elsewhere, or to use the proceeds in any way that should come within the obvious intent of the pious donors, they could not appropriate the money to any other use.

Every one who contemplates the establishment of an institution, or the aiding of a church, or any other similar benefaction, will feel a new confidence in the permanence of what he does.

In regard to the course to be taken by the proprietors of Church Green, we doubt not that it will be wisely taken, and be in accordance with the best interests of the cause. But we presume that it is generally agreed, that these interests are not best served by keeping up services in that locality; and the probable necessity of some change has revived in our own mind a plan, which two years ago we took occasion to suggest, whereby we think the purpose of the society and the welfare of the denomination might be equally promoted.

A SUGGESTION.

Our denomination needs in the city of Boston a large building, in some convenient locality, that shall answer certain important purposes that are not now adequately served.

Let us describe the kind of building we have in mind: —

1. It should contain, first of all, a spacious hall for our large public meetings. The experience of the last two years shows how great and how increasing is the demand for such a room. We have resorted to the Boston Theatre or to the Music Hall; and the frequency of our meetings, and the regularity of the attendance, certainly warrant the consideration of a place that should compare with either of these in attractiveness and accommodation, and that should be distinctively our own.

2. We need quite as much a smaller room for meetings of a different kind. Now we are indebted to the courtesy of some one of our churches whenever such a meeting is called; and the Arlington-street Society or the Hollis-street Society are very often asked for the use of their vestry. They never refuse; but, aside from the inconvenience which this must occasion to the societies, it would manifestly be an advantage to have some suitable place that

should be understood to be appropriated for such general denominational use.

3. Then we need a different room for social purposes. The well-remembered Berry-street Teas, on Anniversary week, so helpful to the mutual acquaintance of our brethren, and the social entertainment of the "Christian-Register" Association two years ago, will suggest how much advantage there might be from a room, with conveniences for providing refreshments, where gatherings like those mentioned could on certain occasions be entertained.

4. We would have in the same building a pleasant reading-room, open always, where members of the denomination could always find access, where strangers visiting the city could always repair; and smaller rooms, where committees could meet, and where people could see each other and help each other's interest in our denominational affairs.

5. We would have in the same building the offices of the American Unitarian Association, and of such other organizations as might properly centre there.

6. We would have an attractive book-store for the sale of Liberal publications.

In short, we would have it comprise all that might properly belong to a denominational headquarters or home. We would have it in a convenient and conspicuous situation, and every way worthy of our position.

Now, suppose that the proprietors of the New South should contribute towards such a building the proceeds of their present estate, perpetuating their name in the name of the new edifice. Suppose that the American Unitarian Association should add to it the sum for which our present building could be sold. There would be already a good beginning towards the amount that would be required.

Suppose, then, that one of the Societies that are now contemplating a larger church, should add its large subscriptions, and occupy this new hall and these lecture-rooms and society-rooms for its own meetings and parish purposes, obtaining thereby a vastly better accommodation than it could secure with its own means alone. And then, if any thing more were needed, suppose the men of wealth, who would be interested to see such an enterprise succeed, should be appealed to, might there not be provided something that would not only be a glory to the denomination, but be of vast service to the cause?

Now is the time to move; and we believe, that, if the trustees of the New South should favor it, the plan might be successfully carried through.

Of course, the suggestion is offered in no spirit of dictation towards the parties referred to, who may see reasons why it cannot be thought of by them. But we are sure enough of their interest in the cause to know that they will receive the suggestion kindly; and we are glad of the occasion given us by their position to propose an enterprise which we have only roughly sketched, but which we most earnestly press upon the attention of our denomination.

THE LIFE TO COME.

BY A. P. PUTNAM.

(*Concluded.*)

Nor do we accept the idea or doctrine, that the status in which the soul finds itself conditioned, as it enters upon its future life, is fixed and irrevocable for ever. As death has no power to effect a change in the essential character of one's spiritual nature, so it has none, we believe, to destroy his free moral agency. There is nothing in Scrip-

ture, or in reason, that teaches us that man will not still be the creature of motives, capable of voluntary choices, and subject to the influences of life's ever-unfolding revelations and phenomena. If one who is admitted to the society of the angels should *desire* to surrender his blessed inheritance and accept the portion of the unbelieving and impenitent, who shall say that he cannot and may not do it, however improbable it is that his choice will lie in that direction? Or if one who goes forth into the future, still an alien from God and the blessedness of the heavenly life, should repent of his evil courses, loathe the sin that has reigned over him, hunger and thirst after the immortal good, and aspire to something nobler and better, what shall hinder? Does God at death annul and annihilate for ever the power of the soul to will and to do, freely and fully, whatsoever it listeth? There is no sufficient authority for such a belief. Is it said that the soul, by its life of sin and of its consequences here, renders itself unable to rise above its helpless, undone condition there? The history of spiritual life on earth shows, that no soul can sink so deeply in moral evil as to lose entirely its power to rise by the Divine aid; and who will dare to limit the reach and the might of infinite grace?

> "I dare not fix, with mete and bound,
> The love and power of God."

And if it be urged, that no sufficient motives and inducements will be held out in the future to dissuade the sinner from his sad career, and attract him to goodness and God, it may, we think, be said in reply, that the soul will there have even a *more vivid* apprehension of the consequences of transgression than it could possibly have here; that many of the temptations which now beset it, and which are incident to a life in the flesh and in a world like this,

cannot attend it then; and that, in the great spiritual universe, such wondrous manifestations of God's glory will disclose themselves to view, and such mighty and unprecedented agencies and instrumentalities will be employed to complete the grand redemptive work of Christ, that the sufferer must feel the force of unwonted influences and considerations drawing him on and up to heaven. Yes, we believe that repentance is possible in the life that is to come, as well as in the life that now is. And to suppose that whenever, now or hereafter, the soul is truly penitent, and cries for mercy, and struggles for deliverance and blessedness, God is relentless and unmoved, is to make the Deity a passionless and cruel tyrant, and to set at nought the whole tenor of his Holy Word. It is to attribute to him a character which we should abhor in any earthly parent or friend. A God like this is not the one that Christ has revealed to us, — infinitely tender and pitiful, ever longing and yearning for the return of his children, and quick and glad, like the father of the prodigal son, to run forth and welcome his wandering offspring the moment he sees them come back to the paternal embrace and mansion.

And this turning to God, of which I speak, is, we believe, to be, sooner or later, the act and experience of every soul that he has made. Accordingly we reject the doctrine, that any portion of the human race, any child of the Infinite Father, will lie down in everlasting torments. The popular doctrine of future eternal punishment, however its more skilful and cultivated defenders may seek to relieve it of its fiercer aspects and make it more acceptable to refined and humane people, is one which seems to us utterly inconsistent with the thought of God's infinite love, wisdom, and power; at war with all the best sentiments, instincts, and ideas of the human mind; and at

variance with the general teachings and prevailing spirit of the New Testament.

The nature — the attributes of God are the sure pledge of the final extirpation of sin and suffering from the universe, and the commensurate reign, at last, of righteousness, peace, and joy.

There is no word that so fitly describes the very essence and character of the Divine Being, as *Love*. God *is* Love. That a Being, whose name and nature are love itself, would create a soul and endow it with immortality, knowing at the same time that it would choose for itself a continued life of sin, and, in consequence, be endlessly and unspeakably miserable in hell, is a proposition whose unreasonableness seems too apparent to merit serious refutation. Infinite Goodness would surely *desire* and *will* the ultimate and eternal happiness of every intelligent creature, and would never rest content so long as a single soul remained still a stranger to the life and bliss of heaven.

What the *Infinite Love* would thus *require*, *Infinite Wisdom* could devise methods and instrumentalities to *accomplish*. The goodness of God is no blind force, subject to the caprices of fortune and the contingencies o defeat. Its forecast is as measureless as its kindness, its ways as sure as is its wish. If it be the will or desire of the Divine Benevolence that all shall at length be holy and happy, the Divine Wisdom is abundantly able so to order or arrange the course and affairs of Providence, that this glorious result may be attained.

Then what God's *love* is good enough to *dictate*, and what his *wisdom* is adequate to *plan*, his infinite *power* is sufficiently mighty to *fulfil*. As no event can possibly occur to surprise the beneficent, pre-ordained arrangements of his wisdom, so is there no antagonistic element or agency in the universe that can defy his omnipotence to

rob it of its victory. His infinite *love*, we say, requires the salvation at last of *all*. His infinite *wisdom* cannot fail to discover the needed *way*. His infinite *power* is ample to execute all that his *goodness* prompts him *to do;* and his *wisdom* directs him how to *perform*.

If, moreover, the doctrine of everlasting punishment is made to involve the idea of the ceaseless continuance of sin in the souls and lives of the lost, God's infinite holiness, also, is pledged to the accomplishment of the sublime consummation to which we look. Moral evil is the one only thing in the universe which God abhors, and which is at war against his righteous government. It would seem that his throne could never be quite secure, as certainly his reign could never be quite complete, except as every trace of its existence shall finally be obliterated from his dominions. His own glory, as well as his very nature, demands that at last it shall cease to be; and any arbitrary, eternal infliction of suffering or vengeance, beyond the hour of its extirpation, would be an act not less cruel and horrible in its spirit, than unproductive of any beneficent result.

Or, if it still be urged that God's justice requires that the sinner shall continue for ever to be punished after he shall have repented of his wickedness and forsaken it altogether, we claim that the penalties of Heaven's violated law are remedial in their design and character, and that Divine Justice is never so completely satisfied as when one ceases to do evil and learns to do well. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Repentance return, restoration, — this is all that God asks of us; and, when it is secured, there is pardon, reconciliation, and peace. How long the memory of transgression may linger still in the mind, and how much the soul, by its life of sin

on earth, may be retarded in its great march of progress through eternity, we do not know. But this is not the endless retribution which the popular doctrine of everlasting torment contemplates. Certain effects or consequences of sin may possibly thus endure for ever, or they may not. But we cannot believe that they will, in any event, interfere with the glorious growth, joy, and rest, which, we are persuaded, are the never-ending destiny of all who live.

Against this doctrine of the endless damnation of souls in hell, all the finer sensibilities, the humaner feelings, and the better hopes and prayers of our hearts, rise up in united protest. What a commentary upon the dogma in question it is, that, as one of its advocates has recently said, its opposite theory of the final and universal salvation of the race is "the beautiful dream of noble natures"! And so it is. Whatever is divine within us, all that is pure and true and good, calls for an end, at last, to every form of sin and woe, and for the perpetual and illimitable reign of righteousness and joy. And that which is divine in our own souls is but a transcript of the excellence and love that constitute the nature of our God.

And all this is the general lesson of Scripture as well. However the more gloomy views of the ancient pagan world, or the fanciful speculations of rabbinical writers, may have affected the minds of the authors of the New Testament, and colored their allusions to this general subject, yet the prevailing spirit of the gospel, and its apostolic prophecies concerning the great future that is to be, afford us a sufficient foundation for our faith in the cheering, thrilling doctrine which we hold. Christ reveals to us a God who is an infinite Father, and whose love cannot for a moment be measured by the affection of any earthly parent. It is ever, with him, the essential spirit and purpose of the Divine Being to seek and to save that

which is lost. To the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, as he employs them with reference to the future retributions of the wicked, the most enlightened Biblical interpreters more and more agree in giving the sense or meaning of only an indefinitely prolonged continuance of time; as when, in other portions of the Bible, they are used to describe the protracted, but by no means never-ending, duration of the hills and mountains, or of the possession which the Israelites received, as they entered the land of Canaan. And not alone the properly understood language and drift of the writings of the Evangelists, but also the sublime promises and prospects by which the Epistles give character to the mighty future, — when an end is put to sin, and death is swallowed up in victory, and God shall be all in all, — necessitate the conviction that every being created in the Divine image shall at last be the heir of life and heaven. It were easy to wage a war of isolated and controverted texts. For every passage which you shall adduce in support of the doctrine of everlasting punishment, I will bring forward another that shall make it ineffectual to your purpose. We choose rather to find out the true spirit of Christ, and the general teaching of the New Testament; assured that here is given to us the surest revelation of the mind of God himself. That single parable of the prodigal son is, in itself alone, sufficient to warrant the position we have taken, and to vindicate the views we hold so dear.

Liberal Christianity is a Christianity that recognizes the ceaseless development of the human soul, and the everlasting progress of the race in truth, purity, love, power, and happiness. In the great life of sin and change, now or hereafter, the soul or the race may, for a time, be hindered or set back in its destined course; but it will only be to be carried forward again, at length, to the realization of some better hope. Mysterious as may seem the spiritual

marches and countermarches of humanity, the end and purpose of them all, we believe, is victory and glory. God is, in history and in providence, guiding and overruling all things to the universal good. There is nothing which he has created or permitted in his vast dominions that shall not attest his infinite and eternal love. The experience of sin, perhaps, will but give, by awful contrast, the needed meaning and beauty to the holiness of heaven. Out of the depths of earthly suffering the soul most truly rises to the heights of celestial rapture. Life derives a new significance and splendor from the great fact of death and decay. It is evil and pain and death together that will form the dark background of the ever-brightening picture of the immortal life, bringing out into more visible relief and glorious attractiveness the realizations which it portrays. A beautiful dream, if you will; but it is one that is not only in harmony with our best thought of God, the holiest longings of the soul, and the noblest interpretations of the Scriptures, but is the constantly growing faith of Christendom. The sects may profess to believe, and may try to think they believe, the doctrine of everlasting punishment; but they do not and cannot succeed. Ministers may firmly retain it in the creeds of the Churches; but most of them are afraid to preach it, and their audiences will not hear it. Parents who subscribe to it, reject it when their unconverted children die. It is a dogma out of which the life has departed for ever. There is not a single doctrine of the popular faith, beside, in regard to which there is such a wide-spread, latent unbelief as exists in respect to this. Whatever men may say or subscribe to, their general daily life and conduct show, that the idea of the endless agony of all who die in their sins is one that has no hold upon their minds or hearts; and the retention of it, under such circumstances, in their articles of faith, and the persistent

attempt which they make to persuade themselves that they accept it and credit it, when they inwardly know they do not and cannot, and when their constant spirit and manner attest so clearly their disbelief of it, seem to us like something that is essentially dishonest and pernicious. The world is coming to accept more cheering and ennobling views of providence and destiny. The best and brightest minds of the Church of to-day have discarded, or are discarding, the doctrine. The advanced thought of the philosophical and intellectual world disowns it. The truest tendencies of the age are away from it. Art no longer revels in the delineations of its awful horrors; and poetry finds no more its inspiration in its indescribable miseries, but breathes forth the pure hope and noble faith of humanity in some such strain as this of Tennyson, in whose "In Memoriam" are contained, says Robertson, "the most satisfactory things that have ever been said on the Future State:" —

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain!

Behold! we know not any thing:
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last, — far off, — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring."

The life of progress, of which I have spoken, is one that necessarily involves a life of action. Strange views have prevailed in the Christian world in regard to what constitutes the rest of heaven. Weary of the sicknesses and sufferings of the body, the temptations and conflicts of life, and the changes and uncertainties of the world around us, men have sighed for a sphere where all might be repose and permanence for ever; and have thought of heaven as a region into which they should enter, and be at once perfectly happy, undisturbed, and content, eternally hymning their songs and waving their palms. But this is not the rest of heaven. The rest of the soul, — what is it? It is, indeed, a sense of the divine favor; it is a consciousness of purity; it is a likeness to Christ, and oneness with God; it is harmony in its fullest, highest meaning. But it is something besides all this, and something upon which all this is conditioned, and with which it is for ever associated, — a wise and vigorous exercise of the powers and faculties of our God-given natures. Growth is a law of our being, and is dependent upon activity. Without work, struggle, and aspiration, we are not happy: we rust, and we retrograde. There is always a keen delight in putting forth our energies for some noble object or end; and it is thus that we inevitably develop into what is larger and better. The life of heaven, hereafter as now, is a life of constant, ceaseless exertion, while it must needs be free from the pain, fatigue, weariness, and discomforts which so often attend the exertion of the body here. It is because we always in our minds associate these with the idea of activity, that we so often indulge the hope that our future state will be one of profound tranquillity and inertia. But these constitute no part of the inheritance of the blessed life that is to be. Unencumbered and unembarrassed by the ills of the flesh and the hindrances of its present mate-

rial surroundings, the soul will there enjoy a freedom which it here has never known; and the very awakening and tension of its glorious, unfettered, and emancipated strength, will be to it a zest and joy more blissful far than the most favored condition of supine, ignoble security of which it can possibly conceive. It is thus, and thus alone, that the immortal spirit ascends for ever and ever, nearer and still nearer to God, more and more comes to be like God, and loses itself deeper and deeper in God's bosom of immeasurable and eternal love.

Heaven, too, is a house of many mansions; a world of innumerable scattered circles and communities of happy residents; of endlessly different stages or degrees of intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress; of infinitely varied interests of life and departments of service, — where every good taste and talent can find their legitimate sphere of exercise and enjoyment, and nothing will ever be lost. Not in vain, not without some wise and beneficent purpose and end, has God created his children with such wondrously diversified powers and capacities; endowing each of us with peculiar gifts, and fitting us every one, by a discipline all our own, for a certain work and mission, which no one else is qualified so well to fulfil. For some distinct and definite object, God has made and fashioned us all; and it is for this that his providence is ordered to educate and discipline us. In every period of our earthly life, we are reminded how the heavenly Father has sought to prepare us for present duties and responsibilities by previous gifts, instructions, and guidance. The wise improvement of all that he vouchsafes or sends us, is the best possible preparation for any sphere or service to which we may be called. It is so in the life that now is: it will be so in the life that is to come. Life is a perpetual school; and all the lessons and influences that enter into it or belong to it have

a vast and most momentous bearing upon life's great future. There, in the mighty world that lies before us, — so illimitable in extent, so varied in its interests, so complicated in its relations, so limitless in its opportunities, — there will be ample scope for every faculty and energy and attainment of which we may be the possessors. The wise shall continue yet to instruct, and the seeker still to explore. The benevolent shall find other objects of their disinterested care and love; and the strong and brave marshal and lead, as of yore, the ranks of the redeemed. The children of song will tune their voices in heaven to diviner music than they ever discoursed on earth, and the votaries of beauty will there discern more perfect visions of loveliness and grandeur than ever enchanted them here. The lips of eloquence shall be touched with a more celestial fire to speak of the wonders and glories of eternity; and the devotees of science shall enter into fresh and measureless realms of truth and knowledge, to discover and unveil their eternal laws and principles. And there, too, is the life of mutual helpfulness and disinterested service, each assisting the rest in every noble way, — the strong befriending the weak, the enlightened the ignorant, and the far-advanced and the well-experienced in the better world those who come fresh from the earthly shores; while fond affection and tender pity shall descend from the serener elevations of power and peace, to bear heavenly succor to the objects of their concern and love on the slopes or vales below: all combining, sympathizing, and working together to reach at length the distant summits above and beyond. Well does the venerable Dr. Beecher say, "Excepting exemption from sin, intense, vigorous, untiring action is the greatest pleasure of the mind. I could hardly wish to enter heaven, did I believe its inhabitants were idly to sit by purling streams, fanned by balmy airs. Heaven, to be a place of happiness,

must be a place of activity. Has the far-reaching mind of Newton ceased its profound investigations? Has David hung up his harp, as useless as the dusty arms in Westminster Abbey? Has Paul, glowing with God-like enthusiasm, ceased itinerating the universe of God? Are Peter and Cyprian and Edwards and Payson and Evarts idling away eternally in mere psalm-singing? Heaven is a place of restless activity, the abode of never-tiring thought. David and Isaiah will sweep nobler and loftier strains in eternity; and the minds of saints, unclogged by cumbersome clay, will for ever feast on the banquet of rich and glorious truth."

Without this prospect of constant and everlasting action, growth, and progress, of which I have spoken; without this hope on which I have dwelt, of the ultimate restoration and felicity of all who are created in the image of God, — life and providence would be a dark and awful enigma. There would be no sure relief to the soul; and work would lose its highest inspiration and joy. It is the blessed thought that every thing is moving resistlessly and unfailingly on to such an unspeakably glorious consummation, and that all shall yet be well, —

> "No wanderer lost,
> A family in heaven," —

it is this that solves every dreadful problem, buoys us up in all our doubts and fears and sorrows, and gives a thrill of delight and an unwonted element of power to be and to do all that God requires. It is this that casts a cheerful aspect over all the ways and mysteries of the life that now is and of that which is to come, and makes us strong and brave to go forward to meet whatever the years and ages and cycles of eternity may have in reserve for us. And it is this inspiring and uplifting doctrine which, it seems to

me, constitutes a vital part of the Liberal faith which we profess, and which ought to be more strongly emphasized and more prominently set forth to view by us than it has been in the past. We are, as a denomination, false to our trust, recreant to our principles, unmindful of our opportunity, and heedless of the call of Providence, if we fail to make known to men, as in all the sad, revolving centuries, it has never yet been understood, that God is an infinite Father, and that every soul he has made is sealed to glory honor, and immortality. Thanks to that other large and respectable body of Christians by whom, under much obloquy and persecution, these great truths have been so distinctly enunciated and courageously spread abroad. They have been faithful to the light that was given them, and have done a noble work for the Liberal Church of the future. We may well learn from their example.

Nor can I bring this lecture — this series of lectures — to a close, without an allusion to a work of vast importance, by which one of our most accomplished scholars has presented this general subject to the religious world in all its relations and bearings, and has made to the theological literature of the century a contribution which entitles him to the lasting gratitude and honor of the Church. Mr. Alger, while still a young man, devoted for twelve years what leisure hours he could command, in connection with his duties of a regular ministry, to the investigation of all that men had ever thought or written upon the mighty questions and interests of the future life. With a diligence, thoroughness, and heroism such as but few authors in our own time and country have illustrated, he examined thousands of volumes in English, French, German, Latin, and I know not what other languages, and seemed to ransack the libraries of the world, embodying, at last, the result of his studies in a compact and solid book, — "A History of the Doctrine of

the Future Life," — which affords an epitome of the opinions and speculations of all ages, countries, and sects, in regard to Death, the Resurrection, the Judgment, and the Rewards and Retributions of Eternity. No one can read this invaluable work without being amazed at the extent of learning and research which was necessary to its completion, and without being struck with the beauty and interest which the writer has thrown around the themes scholastics and theologians have so frequently made dry and repulsive to the general reader. It were well, indeed, if more of us, at a time when books of light and transient value engage so many of our moments and so much of our attention, would only grapple with productions of this weightier sort, pertaining to subjects which concern us all so vitally; and would so master their contents as not to be entire strangers to the scenes and solemnities that soon shall stand forth to our waking eyes.

Be it ours, while moving amidst these shifting, shadowy things of earth, not to be unmindful of the world to which we go. Its stupendous, enduring realities; its exalted and saintly companionships; its rapturous greetings and everlasting re-unions; its inestimable privileges and infinite possibilities; its matchless splendors and overwhelming glories; its joy, its love, its praise, and its rest; God himself overarching, encircling, and filling all; and Christ leading his followers yet to living fountains of water, — it is these, and such as these, that invite us on, and that, while we are in the world, should lift us above its power and evil, that, when the hour of departure comes, we may go forth, with a strong and immortal trust, to realize in glad fruition what now is only the object of faith.

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And so, beside the silent sea,
I wait the muffled oar:
No harm from Him can come to me,
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air:
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

O brother! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me, that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee."

THE CHURCH.

"THE Church: what a word was there!" So cries Carlyle. To him, its strongest spell is in calling up the image of the little kirk among the hills, standing quiet, with its quiet dead around it. Few, and to be pitied, are they to whom the word brings no tender thought of some spot, hallowed in its purpose and dear in its associations. The name is prized by all, and is not willingly relinquished when any one body of Christians would confine it to themselves. In England, *the* Church has succeeded in so confining it, and all dissenters from her must worship in "chapels;" but here, in America, be we Catholic, Orthodox, or Unitarian, we all have our Church: and only Jewish synagogue and Quaker meeting-house stand apart.

But this is regarding the word only in its secondary meaning, as used for the *building* set apart by the Church for its purposes of worship and instruction. The true, living Church, — what is that? What was it at first? what is it now? what is it to be?

Humble gatherings in upper chambers, with doors locked against the violence of the Prince of this world; groups around a common meal, where, in the breaking of bread, the Master was always remembered; listeners clustered by night around a tent-maker, whose vision for the unseen things which are eternal was keener than theirs; slaves and exiles, shivering while they sang, in Roman catacombs, candles for sunlight and a tomb their altar, — such the earliest Christian Church.

Led by the scholarship and childlike piety of a Bunsen, we of this generation may watch the worship of that Church shaping itself, and may join with all our hearts in its service of mingled teaching, familiar forms, free prayer, and silent prayer. What has been gained by the loss of any of the parts which made so perfect a whole? Would we had also kept more of the temper in which teachers of that day could fearlessly leave what might be unsaid for each individual to supply, "Seeing ye all have the Spirit of God"!

The Church of this simple worship was a body of men and women, who accepted Christ's teaching of God and duty and immortality, and strove, and helped each other strive, to live according to his standard, by the grace which he had shown was in them all; men and women, — ay, and children, — whom no loss nor pain could turn from their narrow, chosen path, nor death itself: for to them death was not, and they walked unfalteringly in the way of life everlasting.

Who can tell what the Church *is* now? There is one formal rendering. Those who have been through a certain ceremony compose the Church, distinct from the world, distinct even from the congregation.

There is a spiritual rendering. When we pray for "the Church universal," do we limit our prayers to those who "have been confirmed," or "joined the Church"? We think rather of the great mass of the faithful, — all who, with love unfeigned, serve God and man. Humble, patient, devout hearts must needs be among the Lord's own, without human leave or hindrance. To this wide, spiritual interpretation we must be true, if we would be Christian in spirit as well as name; but the

other thought may be inclosed within it, and there, in its proper place, may have its use.

Some formal act of self-consecration has always had an attraction for the human soul, which religion cannot afford to ignore. Let us look to see what is its place in the Church.

The days when embracing Christianity involved losing all that was dear to man, except his soul, have passed. Religion now demands no outward sacrifice, little outward change. Within, true religion is as exacting as ever; and the soul that tries will find it no easier now than nineteen hundred years ago, to serve God *and* Mammon. The law of the Spirit and the law of the world aim at different ends, and frame different lives; and each new life must stand at the parting of the ways, and choose for itself. And, if it choose the higher law and upward way, it must be strung for sacrifice, and able to endure hardness. We cannot believe it to be coward dread of this which holds many back from the loftiest choice; for in those earlier times, when the cost was unspeakably greater, the noble army of martyrs stood ready, and manhood is not dead upon the earth in this our day.

The Church has held a false position. She has let herself be made the sanctuary of mighty crimes and errors, until truth and justice have been forced to violate her so-called holy places in pursuit. Even as latest and best built, her walls have still been forms, and her only door intellectual belief. Let her change her ground. Let the world know that she shelters the innocent, teaches the ignorant, opens her door to all who knock, lets the Spirit of God speak freely within her, and fears none of its utterances, old or new. Let it know that she calls all to herself in the name of Christ, as in the name of the highest ideal of *life*, and asks of us only to *live* worthy of the name by which we are called, and so enter in and possess. Then would not young, strong hearts yearn to belong to her? Would they not spring to take their stand by her side against fear, error, and degradation?

You who believe that here, and nowhere else, is the ground for the Church, labor to build it here. Go not out from it, because its past has been unworthy of its possibilities; but, by

your lives and words, strive to develop its powers, and help it claim its heritage.

Then will such forms as it sees fit to retain take widened, spiritualized meaning. Parents will offer the child in baptism, with no superstition as to the effect of the rite, but as sign of gratitude to Him who gave it, and pledge of their purpose to rear a child worthy of him. Then will dogma and mystery and formality pass from the communion service. With no demand upon the intellect to bar the way, with no narrower invitation than to "all who wish to live a Christian life," it can grow with the new, instead of dying with the old.

Because the religious life is a new life, a life of one lofty purpose, and there is an instinct in the human soul which makes it helpful to begin a new life with a decided step, therefore let it be possible for any that will to come forward openly, and take their place in the ranks of the glorious Church of God. Let such an act be made the oath of allegiance to the good and true, the offering of self in gratitude to the good God, and pledge of life in his service. A rite so understood would be, I think, not without charm to every manly soul, in any age of the world. Then, because many meek souls serve God best unobserved, making no outward sign, and the ways by which souls find him are as many as the souls, let not submission to a rite be *demanded* of any child of his, before it is admitted to every privilege the Church can offer it.

Because there is in many, perhaps most, minds a love of symbolism, so that the partaking of bread and wine gives a force and point to the service which it would not otherwise possess to them; and because to other minds this partaking is so consecrated by the associations of centuries, that it would be sorely missed, — therefore let those ancient symbols of what we have received from the All-Giver be offered still. But, because the form is nothing and the spirit all, in the sight of God, let each soul act according to its own sense of need; and let no human eye mark whether the elements be received or no, or whether one move toward the table, or stay behind in uninterrupted thought.

Because different communities and times have different de-

sires, let no superstition fix limits of time for the service. Purely human must such orderings be, for we have not even legend of Divine command on which to found them. Whether monthly periods of self-collection and renewed consecration, or an annual feast of commemoration, be most solemn and helpful, let each body of believers and their teacher determine for themselves.

In all other services of the Church, all must listen while one teaches; and the intellect or taste is constantly tasked. Let us, therefore, keep one hour wherein to sit down together as brethren, and, in silent pauses, pray our own prayers, and seek spiritual communion with each other, with friends invisible, with Christ, and the Father of souls.

For then and there may we draw nearer than elsewhere to that Holy One, the touch of whose garments still gives out virtue. And as some saintly one, whose name we bear, may be honored and loved and truly *remembered* by us, though dead before we were born, so may we grow into personal knowledge and love of Him who passed from the life of flesh centuries ago, but truly to know whom is still "life everlasting."

To unite ourselves with pious souls in all these centuries; to bind ourselves closer to each other, to Christ, to God; to commemorate Christ's supreme sacrifice, by offering ourselves a living sacrifice, — are not *these* purposes worthy of the holiest service of the holiest Church of which we can conceive?

Is not this Church worthy of the future?

H. W. HALL.

July, 1867.

CORRESPONDENCE OF REV. C. H. A. DALL.

To the Rev. C. H. A. DALL, M.A., Calcutta.

MY DEAR SIR, — Agreeably to your sage advice, in note dated 5th August, 1866, I have had recourse to prayer. I pray almost regularly every morning, at or about six o'clock, after bathing; besides, I now and then get opportunity to pray before breakfast, in the evening, and in the night before I go to bed. I feel I have derived ample good by it. I am not yet prepared

to do so far as to forsake my family, for whose sake I have been compelled to stick to company of superstitious and idolatrous relations and neighbors; but when I consider that there is no difference existing between myself and my family, — my wife, I am sure, has understood the falsity of idolatry, though she cannot express that, for fear she incurs the displeasure of those by whom she is closely surrounded, — I do not know how I can be justified in forsaking her.

OUR MISSION, CALCUTTA, Aug. 18, 1867.

DEAR BROTHER LOWE, — I inclose you this letter, from a devoted teacher of the Maharajah's school at Burdwan. You hardly need proof, I think, that we are doing in Calcutta a positively religious work. If there be religion in the Lord's prayer, there is vital religion and Christian salvation in our daily work here. Letters like this (inclosed) will show you that sparks fly far and wide from our anvil in Calcutta, and are kindling in the souls of men the spirit of self-search and confession and prayer; and that, too, in such as are teachers of others, and willing propagators of the truth in remote cities. This good man, Peara Lal Singh, came from Burdwan, seventy miles, and spent last Sunday with us here at the Mission-house. He is a covenant member of a Hindoo Unitarian or Theistic church, or Brahmo Somaj, at Burdwan, which has its *weekly* services in a building set apart for worship and preaching, as strictly as any Christian church. Its discussions turn often upon the life and teachings of Jesus; and about half the members are for his gospel, and half *against* making it the "man of their counsel."

I understand, Brother Lowe, that there has been a discussion, recently held among our English Unitarian brethren in London, conducted in a generous spirit, on this particular point, namely, whether our work here be properly religious, or merely secular: which means (does it not?) whether heart and soul are led to God and heaven by what we do; or whether our thoughts and labors for the Hindoos look no farther than this world, — *i.e.*, to money-making and self-support. I smile to think how little those understand us who take the latter ground. I regret

that no one has yet put within my reach a copy of the London "Inquirer," in which, I hear, that this public debate on our claims, as *religious* teachers in India, has been fully reported. A friend who has seen the report tells me that the question had friendly advocacy, both *pro* and *contra;* and that a fine opportunity, or call, is thus given to us to show our colors, and say whether we are doing a gospel work or no. Again and again you have received from us letters full of the same testimony as this inclosed letter, which assures you and us — all the more truly, because the more privately — that thoughtful men are learning from us to adopt habits of prayer to a personal God, a Father in heaven, a real Friend, such as they never knew before. Nor is it easy for us, who have always, from our childhood, conversed lovingly with God, to realize what a new-risen sun of light and joy beams in upon a man who never before dreamed of praying as Christians pray, but whose ideal of worship was a blank contemplation of the Infinite Abyss of being; or, in plain English, an unnatural struggle, without thought or hope of sympathy, after perfect *absence of mind.* Here is a teacher of youth in a daily school, and of adults in a weekly church-meeting, who says that perseverance in habits of prayer has brought him a wholly new experience. None, surely, will say that a distinctly religious work is not here going forward; though this, to be sure, is seventy miles north-west of Calcutta. I doubt if our English friends know, that, for seven years or more, the simple gospel-wisdom of Jesus and love of God has been set forth to the clear apprehension of an audience often exceeding 200 souls, in their own language, colloquially interpreted to them by the more Christian among their teachers, either daily for half an hour, or on alternate days. Nor can they be aware, that this has gradually prepared the way for the happy introduction, not merely of a few "*precepts* of Jesus," but of the whole Bible, as a class-book, with our senior pupils, who *memorize* well-explained portions of the life of Christ, week by week. Our boys, I am sure, would laugh at the ignorance of any one who should say that ours was a *secular* school. *Government* schools are secular; but ours is *religious*, our Committee say, "in the wisest and best way."

Ever your favored brother, DALL.

LETTER FROM CHARLES G. AMES.

SANTA CRUZ, CAL.

DEAR MR. LOWE — My year's engagement with the American Unitarian Association terminated with last September, before which time I had entered into a sort of compact with a congregation in Santa Cruz to spend a year here. In October, my family arrived; and our "own hired house" has sheltered us through one of those trying, rainy winters which California may expect once in five or six years. But with returning brightness, and in the greenness and bloom of the young year, we are fast forgetting the long storms and heavy shadows.

You were mistaken in saying I had accepted an invitation to settle with "a newly organized society in Santa Cruz." No organization exists as yet. I am preaching to a congregation of about one hundred and fifty; there is a deep, constant interest; the people have learned to say "we;" they have a little Sunday school, with a library of one hundred and fifty volumes; their social gatherings are one of the chief "institutions" of the town; the women have put their heads, hearts, and hands together for mutual improvement and general service; and only one word is needed to precipitate the people into an organization and the building of a meeting-house. That word I hardly dare speak. To commit them to such an enterprise and to such expenditure, and then leave them shepherdless, — would that be right? The question revives the pain of the Oregon disappointment. Nor dare I encourage the hope that I will remain here, or that I will settle anywhere as a pastor. But there are not wanting sensible men who say, "Let us organize, and trust to the future for a minister." And they add, "Even if we never have another meeting, all we have done so far is lasting good."

I report to the American Unitarian Association the following missionary service since Oct. 1: Five meetings at Watsonville, where, in favorable weather, an audience of one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty may be depended on; two meetings at Soquel, a village*tte* four miles hence, where sixty people come to hear, and plead for more; and one meet-

ing at San Jose, whither also I go once a month as a lecturer. San Jose, with its five thousand inhabitants, has much more material for a Liberal Society than Santa Cruz; but never till recently did I feel sure of reaching it and touching its heart, Now it is a certainty, that any appointment — on week-day or Sunday — will bring together a hall full of people. Perhaps the lectures have done more than the preaching to make them accessible.

You will see that all this recent experience goes to confirm the impressions of last year concerning California as a field for Liberal Christianity. As regards open ears, hearts, and hands, there can be no more favorable and inviting conditions anywhere in the United States.

In material ways, as well as in sympathy, I can now trust wholly to the readiness of the people. From your treasury I desire no further appropriations; nor need any have been asked for this second year, save for the exigencies of getting started in this new world. My chief regret is, that your investments on this coast do not as yet give certain promise of one permanent society; though I would gladly be responsible for the early appearance of three, if you would engage to supply acceptable ministers. Santa Cruz, San Jose, and Sacramento might be in your "Year Book" for 1868 as well as not, unless you have some scruples about counting such conventicles of radical freethinkers as would constitute a large part of the material; for in no one of these towns could I muster a dozen "Unitarians" of the Boston sort; though I should hope to rally a great multitude who would meet you in cordial fellowship on the broad ground of common aspiration toward a life of faith, hope, and charity.

I would like to tell you how the noises made by the "wings" sound when heard across a continent; but — if ever — that part of my report must come hereafter. With grateful acknowledgment of your uniform kindness and courtesy through the period in which I have served the Association,

Your brother, CHARLES G. AMES.

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

MISSION ROOMS, A. M. E. CHURCH,
No. 49, HOLLIDAY STREET, BALTIMORE, MD., Sept. 14, 1867.

Rev. CHARLES LOWE, Secretary American Unitarian Association.

MY DEAR SIR, — Allow me to acknowledge the receipt of your kind favor of June 27th, and to state, that having been absent from my home most of the time since June 1st, in the West and South-west, has delayed an earlier reply to your note, and the acknowledgment of the package of tracts which you were so kind as to send us for distribution.

Allow me to assure you, dear friend, that our brethren feel most thankful to you and the venerable Association which you represent, for this kind consideration of the wants of the people for whom we labor, and for whose interest we have consecrated our best days and energies.

Allow us again to thank you, because the American Unitarian Association is the first American Association of religionists who has said such words as those of your letter, "We shall be glad to work with you, and avail ourselves of your noble instrumentality."

The Executive Committee of our Missionary Society instruct me to say, that they receive most gratefully your proffer, and shall be most happy to co-operate with you in any way to extend the good work.

We hope, Rev. friend, that this is but the beginning of a most glorious work. For the African Methodist Church is the largest instrumentality of colored persons, united into one body and acting from a common centre, on the American continent; and my own opinion is, if your immense wealth, learning, and piety can be united with our opportunity and facility for doing good, much more can be done than for either of us to labor alone.

An eminent Boston merchant, and a member of Dr. James Freeman Clarke's congregation, after listening to some remarks by Brother William E. Mathews, our active and energetic agent, to his Church, remarked to Dr. Clarke, "The Unitarians could do no better work than to assist your (our) people in spread-

ing Christianity, and good learning, and morals, in the South, among freedmen."

I may be regarded as too urgent in my statements: but I am fully satisfied that all men should aim at the use of the best and most available means for the accomplishment of the most good; and I am happy to know that you are willing to avail yourself of our instrumentality, in circulating such matter as you have.

Rev. friend, I find that both Church and State are converging rapidly to this point, viz., that colored men are the best instrumentality to be used for the elevation of the four millions of ex-bondmen in the South; and therefore all are turning their eyes to the best informed and most pious of our race, to aid in doing the great work of lifting up our brother.

The assurance you give in the following words, viz., "Our only object is to do what we can for the welfare of our brethermen; and we have introduced in our tracts no theological peculiarities, but only the plain doctrines of Christianity, as we understand them, in their application to life and duty," was hardly needed, since we are assured by the conduct of the noble men and women of your denomination, whom I have met in the South and in Baltimore, especially your illustrious friend, Dr. Ware, of this city, that the object has not been to make proselytes of colored persons to any theological dogma, but to make men good, correct, and educated; and admitting the superior advantages which you have had, which have produced superior refinement, my people have accepted any and all assistance which has been proffered to them; and I assure you again, that my people, through our missionaries, are receiving most gladly, and reading with the greatest zest, the tracts you sent.

I am, very truly, yours, JOHN M. BROWN, *Cor. Sec.*

REPORT OF REV. J. M. L. BABCOCK.

LANCASTER, N.H., Sept. 10, 1867.

DEAR SIR, — I send you a brief statement of missionary labors in this section. I have been two Sundays to Guildhall, a small village in Vermont, six miles from here. The attendance

was good, and the attention indicated interest; but, as there are now two societies in operation there, the prospect of getting a foothold for our faith does not seem to be good, although there are evidently some germs of a liberal element, which these labors will serve to quicken.

I have preached three Sundays at Littleton, where we have been very hopeful that a Unitarian society might ultimately be formed. The attendance was small, though at the last meeting it was upward of a hundred. But the prospect is not so encouraging as we expected to find it. There are six or seven families interested, and there are, doubtless, people enough besides, of liberal tendencies, to make up a meeting of respectable numbers, if a meeting of our faith were established. But the difficulties are these: there is not now a good place in which to hold a meeting (a building is now in process of erection which will contain a very good hall); and those who are most interested feel discouraged about attempting to establish a meeting, until arrangements could be made in advance for holding a service oftener than once a month. They thought it best to suspend our meetings for the present. My own impression is, that if a man could be put there to labor all the time, with about half his salary assured outside, that the other half could be secured there, and a society be organized. It is a growing place, and should not be neglected.

I have been to Jefferson, seven miles from here, three Sundays; and the attendance and interest has been more promising than at either of the other places. But a self-sustaining society could never, probably, be formed there, until the population shall be increased. A small society might possibly be organized, which, it is supposed, would be an indirect benefit to Lancaster, which has stood thus far without the sympathy and encouragement that would be experienced from surrounding societies.

The results of the labors of these eight Sundays are not as good as I earnestly desired they might be; but I have endeavored to perform them with hope and fervor, and I am sure that the seed thus sown has not been wasted. People know almost nothing of Unitarianism in this vicinity; and while it is worth

something to carry its voice farther than it has sounded before, it is not, perhaps, to be expected that the fruit should appear so soon.

Our interests here at Lancaster continue to be prosperous. We now count about forty families as regular attendants at our meeting; and, since summer opened, our house has been well filled. The prejudice against our faith seems to be wearing away; we have every Sunday more or less transient attendance, portions of which we hope will become permanent; and, if nothing unforeseen occurs, there is every reason to expect that this society will, before many years, be established on a self-sustaining basis.

Yours sincerely, J. M. L. Babcock.

REPORT OF REV. J. ELLIS.

Winterset, Sept. 15, 1867.

Brother Lowe, — As my second year of missionary labor, under the patronage of the American Unitarian Association, has now closed, I suppose I shall be expected to send in my report. And in said report I will say, in the first place, that I have devoted my *whole* time to the *work* during the year, and have turned aside for nothing, although offers of speculation have been made to me, by different ones, with apparent prospect of gain.

And, secondly, I will say, that my congregations have generally been large and attentive in nearly every place I have been in during the year.

I will remark, thirdly, that in my ministrations I have tried to make my hearers both *think* and *feel*, and have, at least to a certain extent, accomplished that object.

Fourthly, in my labors I have operated mostly among feeble churches belonging to the Christians, for the reason that my salary of four hundred dollars would not support me without some aid from those where I labor.

During the year, I have spoken at Enon, Covington, Indianapolis, Knightstown, Liz City, Thorntown, Linden, Henry City, Quincy, Danville, Macon, Chillicothe, St. Joseph, Whites-

ville, Clarinda, Redfield, Des Moines, Iowa City, Peru, Peoria, and Winterset, confining my labors mostly to Winterset. I have also spoken in schoolhouses, barns, orchards, groves, and in the open air, in the streets of towns and cities. I have attended 4 basket meetings, 5 conferences, and 2 religious conventions. I have delivered 147 sermons, 12 lectures on temperance, 8 on education, 14 on the state of the country, and 5 on social reform. Have made 108 family visits, called on 47 sick persons, married 2 couples, attended 5 funerals, and spoken 23 times to Sabbath schools.

This has been a pleasant year's service in the missionary field, although quite fatiguing to both body and mind. I feel thankful to our common Father for his care over me during the year. I also feel thankful to the American Unitarian Association for their liberality in my support, and I know that God will reward them.

Yours as ever, J. Ellis.

LETTER FROM A MINISTER OF THE CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION IN THE WEST.

Dear Brother, — I write to express my sincere gratitude to you for sending the Journal to me. It is a means of comfort and instruction to us.

I have just read Brother Clarke's articles on the inspiration of the New Testament, with a deep interest. They are excellent, and meet a want I have long felt. They ought to be put in a *tract form*, and distributed among the people everywhe would do great good at this time. Will not the Association take this matter up, and give it to us in a tract? I would like five hundred for distribution in our Conference. There is no feature of our religion on which the people need help so much as on that of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Human nature is fast *outgrowing* the plenary inspiration view: reason and facts are against it; and, if unaided, persons are very likely to drift into the broad and bottomless ocean of scepticism.

REPORT OF MR. N. C. EARL, STUDENT AT MEADVILLE.

MEADVILLE, PENN., Aug. 28, 1867.

BROTHER LOWE, — On the 10th of last month, I set out on a tour, to spend the remainder of our summer vacation in preaching, and selling books. I visited Spring, in Pennsylvania; Ashtabula, Austinburg, Painesville, and Cleveland, in Ohio; and Detroit, East Saginaw, Richfield, and Brandon, in Michigan. I was absent seven weeks, preached every Sunday except one, and delivered one discourse on a week-day evening. I sold a hundred and twenty-seven good books, and distributed a large quantity of tracts. I received for my preaching nine dollars and fifty-one cents, and made altogether, clear of expenses, *about thirteen dollars.*

I intend to spend the remainder of this week canvassing here, and, if successful, shall send you another order for books, the last of this week or the first of next.

Respectfully, N. C. EARL.

PRESIDENT JOHN ADAMS ON UNITARIANISM.

[The following letter has never before been published. A copy of it has kindly been furnished us for publication in the Journal: —]

QUINCY, May 15, 1815.

DEAR DOCTOR, — I thank you for your favor of the 10th, and the pamphlet inclosed, "American Unitarianism." I have turned over its leaves, and found nothing that was not familiarly known to me. In the preface, Unitarianism is represented as only thirty years old.

In New England I can testify as a witness to its old age. Sixty-five years ago, my own minister, the Rev. Lemuel Bryant; Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, of the West Church, in Boston; the Rev. Mr. Shute, of Hingham; the Rev. John Brown, of Cohasset; and perhaps equal to all, if not above all, the Rev. Mr. Gay, of Hingham, — were Unitarians.

Among the laity, how many could I name, — lawyers, physi-

cians, tradesmen, farmers! I could fill a sheet, but at present will name only one, Richard Cranch, a man who had studied divinity, and Jewish and Christian antiquities, more than any clergyman now existing in New England. More than fifty years ago, I read Dr. Samuel Clarke, Emlyn, and Dr. Waterland: do you expect, my dear Doctor, to teach me any thing new in favor of Athanasianism. There is, my dear Doctor, at present existing in the world, a Church Philosophic, as subtle and learned, as hypocritical, as the Holy Roman Catholic, Apostolic, and Œcumenical Church.

This Philosophical Church was originally English. Voltaire learned it from Lord Herbert, Hobbes, Morgan, Collins, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, &c., &c. You may depend upon it, your exertions will promote the Church Philosophic more than the Church Athanasian or Presbyterian. This and the coming age will not be ruled by Inquisitions or Jesuits: the restoration of Napoleon has been caused by the resuscitation of inquisitors and Jesuits.

I am, and wish to be, your friend,

Rev. Dr. Morse. (Signed), John Adams.

INTELLIGENCE.

The South-Middlesex Conference held a meeting at Arlington, Mass., on Wednesday, Sept. 25. Hon. John C. Dodge, of Cambridge, one of the vice-presidents, presided. Rev. Grindall Reynolds, of Concord, opened the discussion upon the subject assigned for consideration, — "The state of religion in our churches; the religious state of society about them; and how the power of the Gospel may be increased in our parishes, and extended beyond them."

At one o'clock the Conference adjourned for one hour, and, by invitation of the Arlington Society, repaired to the vestry of the church, and partook of a collation prepared by the ladies.

In the afternoon, the discussion was continued, and the following resolutions, presented by the Rev. A. B. Muzzey in the morning, were adopted: —

Resolved, That the present condition of the community in its relation to the subject of religion, demands special consideration and effort on our part.

Resolved, That we are called, first of all things, to strengthen the interests of our parishes in practical, spiritual religion.

The following resolution, offered by Rev. E. H. Sears, was also adopted: —

Resolved, That the Secretary of this Conference be requested to ascertain what localities within this Conference are destitute of the means of religious instruction; and that the officers of the Conference be directed to institute means for evangelization.

The Suffolk Conference held a meeting at the Music Hall, Boston, on Sunday evening, Sept. 29, to consider the denominational work of the American Unitarian Association at the South. Hon. Thomas D. Eliot, of New Bedford, President of the Association, presided. The meeting was opened with prayer, offered by Rev. George W. Briggs, D.D., of Cambridgeport, and the singing of a hymn by the audience; after which, addresses were made by the chairman, Rev. John F. W. Ware, of Baltimore, Md.; Rev. Charles Lowe, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association; and Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston. The meeting closed with the singing of the Doxology by the audience.

The Church of the First Parish, Beverly, Mass., having been remodelled, was rededicated, with appropriate services, on Sunday, Sept. 29. The sermon was preached by Rev. John C. Kimball, pastor of the Society.

The First Parish in Beverly celebrated its two-hundredth anniversary, on Wednesday, Oct. 2. Services were held in the church, at eleven o'clock, A.M., as follows: Voluntary; introductory prayer by Rev. Edmund B. Willson, of Salem; anthem; reading from the Scriptures by Rev. Samuel C. Beane, of Salem; singing of two hymns, written for the occasion; prayer by Rev. Edwin M. Stone, of Providence, R.I.; address by Rev. Christopher T. Thayer, of Boston, a former pastor of the Society; singing of the Doxology; benediction by the pastor.

After the exercises in the church, there was a dinner at the Town Hall, at which speeches were made by Dr. W. C. Boyden,

who presided; Rev. Christopher T. Thayer; Rev. Edwin M. Stone; Rev. George E. Ellis, D.D., of Charlestown; Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston; Robert S. Rantoul, Esq., of Beverly; Rev. Edmund B. Willson and Rev. George Batchelor, of Salem; and others.

Rev. Frederic Frothingham was installed as pastor of the First Unitarian Society, Buffalo, N.Y., on Wednesday, Oct. 2. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer by Rev. Frederic W. Holland, of Rochester, N.Y.; reading from the Scriptures by Rev. George W. Hosmer, D.D., President of Antioch College; sermon by Rev. Robert Collyer, of Chicago, Ill.; installing prayer by Rev. Dr. Hosmer; charge by Rev. Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, N.Y.; right hand of fellowship by Rev. J. H. Hartzell (Universalist), of Buffalo; address to the people by Rev. Frederic W. Holland; closing prayer by Rev. Samuel J. May; benediction by the pastor.

The Essex Conference held a meeting at Newburyport, Mass., on Thursday, Oct. 3. The forenoon was principally devoted to hearing reports from the different societies connected with the Conference. Interesting reports were also made of missionary work in West Amesbury, Amesbury Mills, Lynnfield, Ipswich, Middleton, Groveland, and Danvers; and, by a vote of the Conference, the societies in these places were admitted into its fellowship. A collation, prepared by the ladies of the Newburyport Society, was served in the City Hall at noon; and in the afternoon there was a sermon from Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston, and a discussion.

The following resolutions, offered by Rev. J. Vila Blake, of Haverhill, were unanimously adopted: —

Whereas, Our two Divinity Schools of Cambridge and Meadville are our main sources of an educated ministry, and the most efficient means on which we depend for the diffusion among us of theological education; and *Whereas*, we are affectionately interested in these Schools, which are hallowed by the memories of our fathers and great preachers, which still are warm with their large and Catholic spirit, which have proved themselves abreast of the times, and are abodes of that faith which casts out fear, and which are under the care of professors deservedly valued for their scholarship, candor, and liberality; and *Whereas*, the School at

Cambridge has been attacked, and charges been made, calculated to give an entirely false impression of the spirit and character prevailing there, —

Therefore, *Resolved*, That we desire to express our confidence in our Schools in Cambridge and Meadville, and to say that we share the content which the Faculty at Cambridge express with the present spirit in their Schools.

Resolved, That we fervently sympathize with the movement of the friends of Cambridge to provide additional professors, and enlarge the means of instruction.

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be sent to the Faculty of Cambridge and Meadville; and also published in the "Christian Register" and "Liberal Christian."

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the death of William Ellery Channing was appropriately observed at the Arlington-street Church, Boston, on Sunday evening, Oct. 6. Edward Wigglesworth, Esq., presided, and made a few introductory remarks; after which prayer was offered by Rev. George E. Ellis, D.D., of Charlestown. Addresses followed from Rev. Ezra S. Gannett, D.D., Dr. Channing's colleague and successor; Rev. James Walker, D.D., of Cambridge; Rev. Frederic H. Hedge, D.D., of Brookline; Hon. George S. Hillard, of Boston; and Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., of Boston. After the address of Dr. Gannett, a hymn, written for the occasion by Rev. Charles T. Brooks, of Newport, R.I., was sung. The exercises closed with prayer by Rev. Samuel B. Cruft, of Boston, and the benediction.

The Church of the First Parish in Medfield, Mass., having been painted, frescoed, and refitted, a service was held on Sunday evening, Oct. 6, for the purpose of rededicating the house, and installing Rev. James H. Wiggin as pastor of the society. The order of services was as follows: Invocation by Rev. Elisha Gifford, of West Dedham; brief statement, by Rev. Mr. Wiggin, of the changes made in the church; sermon by Rev. Benjamin H. Bailey, of Dedham; reading from the Scriptures appropriate to the re-opening of the church, and prayer of dedication by Rev. Horatio Alger, of South Natick; reading from the Scriptures, appropriate to the commencement of a new ministry, by Rev. George Proctor, of Dover; installing prayer by

Rev. William Brown, of Sherborn; address to the people by Rev. William B. Smith, of Walpole; concluding prayer by Rev. Calvin S. Locke, of West Dedham; benediction by the pastor.

The Liberal-Christian Association of New-York City and vicinity, held its first regular meeting on Monday, Oct. 7. Rev. Frederic A. Farley, D.D., was chosen chairman; Rev. D. K. Lee (Universalist), Treasurer; and Rev. William T. Clarke, Scribe. It is proposed to hold monthly meetings, for the consideration of questions in theology, religion, and ethics; and laymen as well as ministers will be welcomed to it as members.

The Church of the First Unitarian Society in Somerville, Mass., was burned on Tuesday evening, Oct. 8. The fire was the work of an incendiary.

The Norfolk Conference held a meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 9, at Sherborn, Mass. Hon. John C. Park, of Roxbury, the President, presided. The following subject was discussed, "What shall we do to interest our societies in the Communion Service?" after which the following resolution was adopted:—

"*Resolved*, That we, the members of this Conference, ministers and laity, deeply impressed with the importance of the Communion Service, as a means of spiritual growth and Christian life, will from this time make more earnest efforts to create a new interest and a more general participation in the Lord's Supper, in our several churches."

The Sunday-school Society held its Annual Meeting at Salem, Mass., on Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 9 and 10. The meeting was called to order, at the Barton-square Church, on Wednesday, at half-past ten, A.M.; and, in the absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, Rev. Warren H. Cudworth, one of the Directors, was called to the chair. After prayer by Rev. Samuel H. Winkley, of Boston, Mr. James P. Walker, the Secretary of the Society, read the Annual Report. The remainder of the forenoon was occupied in the discussion of the various points presented by the Report; and at half-past twelve, Rev. Edmund B. Willson, of Salem, gave the welcome of the Salem Societies to the Convention, and invited them to partake of a collation in a neighboring hall.

In the afternoon, the Committee on Nominations, previously appointed, reported the following list of officers for the coming year, who were elected: —

President. — Henry P. Kidder, of Boston.

Vice-Presidents. — Rev. Edwin G. Adams, of Templeton; and Rev. Robert Laird Collier, D.D., of Chicago, Ill.

Secretary. — James P. Walker, of Boston.

Treasurer. — Samuel G. Studley, of Charlestown.

Directors. — Rev. Warren H. Cudworth, of East Boston; Rev. Leonard J. Livermore, of Cambridge; Warren Sawyer, S. A. Stetson, and William H. Baldwin, of Boston.

A proposition to change the name of the Society to the Unitarian Sunday-school Society, was made, and laid over till next year. The discussion of topics presented in the Secretary's Report was then resumed, and was continued for some time; after which, Mr. Robert C. Metcalf, of Boston, delivered an address on the "Methods and substance of religious instruction demanded by the times." The address was followed by a debate.

In the evening a sermon was preached by Rev. George L. Chaney, of Boston, from the text, "The life was the light of men."

On Thursday, after an hour devoted to a prayer and conference meeting, the Convention met at half-past nine o'clock, to listen to an address from Rev. William P. Tilden, of Boston, on the subject, "How may we best produce, in the minds of children, a love for the Church and its institutions?" This address was followed by a discussion. A resolution was adopted pledging each parish to contribute to the funds of the Sunday-school Society.

The Secretary stated, before the adjournment of the Convention, that seventy-six societies were represented, and forty-five of them by their pastors.

The Channing Conference held its second meeting at Taunton, on Friday, Oct. 11. In the absence of the President, Timothy Gordon, Esq., of Taunton, Vice-President, presided. The Treasurer, Hon. Seth Padelford, of Providence, presented his report. The following reports were also read: On Christian

Work, by Rev. Augustus Woodbury, of Providence; on Christian Fellowship, by Rev. C. Y. De Normandie, of Fairhaven; on Theological Education and Support of Ministers, by Hon. Thomas D. Eliot, of New Bedford.

After the reading of these reports, the unfinished business of the last meeting was taken up; viz., striking out the last clause of Article 2 of the constitution, which made the Conference auxiliary to the National Conference. After an extended debate, it was voted not to strike out the clause.

The following resolutions were adopted:—

1. *Resolved*, That it is desirable to maintain a missionary within the limits of this Conference, to confer with our scattered brethren, to distribute our tracts, books, and periodicals, and present on every suitable occasion the doctrines of our faith, especially in those places which are now destitute of our preaching.

2. *Resolved*, That the movements made for preaching to the masses of the people, have our cordial approval; but we believe, that, to accomplish their full result of good, they should be accompanied by philanthropic labors for the social, moral, and religious improvement of the community.

3. *Resolved*, That this Conference, regarding an increase of fraternal intercourse between the different branches of the liberal churches as especially desirable, will appoint, through its executive committee, delegates to attend the meetings of the Conference of Christian Churches in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the Rhode-Island Universalist Convention, and the Old-Colony Conference of Universalist Churches.

4. *Resolved*, That this Conference recommend to Unitarian Christians residing in places where there are no Unitarian churches, that they enter into correspondence with the Secretary of the Conference, to the end that the bonds of union between the different members of our body may be strengthened; and, in cases where there are two or more families in a community thus situated, that they hold frequent meetings for devotional exercises, the reading of sermons or religious books, and the performance of such religious services as will conduce to the maintenance of their faith, and their establishment in the Christian truth.

5. *Resolved*, That the Committee on Theological Education be authorized to draw upon the Treasurer of this Conference for the sum of one hundred dollars towards the maintenance of at least one student in theology, annually, either at Cambridge, Meadville, or some other school of liberal Christian theology.

The following resolutions were also adopted: —

Resolved, That the sum of one hundred dollars be forwarded to Rev. George H. Hepworth, by the Treasurer of the Channing Conference, as their contribution, at this time, in aid of the education of young men for the ministry.

Resolved, That a contribution, in aid of the Conference, be taken up in each church between the first of January and the next meeting in April.

Rev. William S. Heywood was installed as pastor of the Society in Hudson, Mass., on Friday, Oct. 11. The sermon was preached by Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston; Rev. Samuel D. Robbins, of Wayland, offered the installing prayer; the charge was given by Rev. Adin Ballou, of Hopedale; the right hand of fellowship by Rev. Samuel H. Winkley, of Boston; and the address to the people by Rev. William H. Fish, of South Scituate. Rev. Eugene De Normandie and Rev. W. A. Start (Universalist), of Marlborough, and Rev. George W. Stacy, of Milford, also took part in the services.

The Corner-Stone of the chapel to be erected for the Christian Unity, Boston, on the corner of Harrison Avenue and Gloucester Place, was laid on Wednesday, Oct. 16, with appropriate services. Addresses were made by Rev. Edward E. Hale, President of the Unity; Mr. Charles J. Bishop, one of its founders; Rev. John Williams, its pastor; Rev. Ezra S. Gannett, D.D.; Rev. Charles F. Barnard; and Rev. Edward I. Galvin.

The Young Men's Christian Union are to have a library-room and a hall in the building.

The Connecticut-Valley Conference held a meeting at Bernardston, on Wednesday, Oct. 16. Rev. John F. Moors, the Secretary, read a report on the condition of the churches, and the movements which are making to extend the preaching of liberal Christianity in that part of the State. This report was followed by an essay from Hon. George Walker, President of the Conference, on the "Relations of the Church to the World."

In the afternoon, Rev. James Eastwood (Universalist), of Brattleborough, Vt., read an essay on "Sabbath Schools, and their relations to the Church, to the Family, and to Religious

Literature." The essays were followed by discussions; which with the music and devotional exercises, took up the whole day, except an hour at noon, during which the company partook of a collation in the Town Hall, provided by the ladies of the Bernardston Society.

Rev. WILLIAM B. BUXTON has resigned the charge of the Society in Wilton, N.H.

Rev. BENJAMIN H. BAILEY, of Dedham, Mass., has accepted a call from the First Parish, Portland, Me.

Rev. STILMAN BARBER has resigned the charge of the Society in Tyngsborough, Mass.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

It is proposed to issue, before January, a Year-book of the American Unitarian Association, on a plan similar to that of last year; and we ask our brethren to communicate to us such information as any one may possess, which would contribute to its completeness.

We rely upon such communications for the correction of any errors in the previous Year-book, and for indicating changes which have since occurred; and we beg immediate attention to this request, on the part of any who have suggestions to give.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Sept. 23.	From Society in Exeter, N.H.	. . . . .	$57.00
23.	„ „ „ Eastport, Me.	. . . . .	41.00
23.	„ Thomas Phillips, as annual membership	. . .	1.00
24.	„ Rev. Augustus Woodbury's Society, Providence, R.I., additional (in all $1,638.00)	. .	138.00
25.	„ Society in Framingham, additional (in all $288.00)	. . . . .	12.00
27.	„ „ „ Rowe	. . . . .	10.00
28.	„ „ „ Burlington, Vt., including life membership for J. N. Pomeroy	.	223.00

Sept. 28.	From	Society in Northborough, additional (in all ($75.00)	$26.25
28.	„	„ „ Brewster	21.20
30.	„	„ „ Bolton	53.00
30.	„	„ „ Sudbury	16.50
30.	„	„ „ Northumberland, Penn.	25.00
Oct. 1.	„	„ „ East Bridgewater	32 00
1.	„	„ „ Montague	16.00
1.	„	Second Society, Portland, for Monthly Journals	29.00
2.	„	Society in Newport, R.I.	105.00
4.	„	„ „ Woburn	305.50
8.	„	„ „ Medfield	46.00
8.	„	„ „ Bridgewater, additional (in all $150).	50.00
8.	„	Mrs. Henry Chapin, Worcester, to make her husband a life member	30.00
8.	„	Rev. J. T. Hewes, as annual membership	1.00
9.	„	Rev. Joshua Young's Society, Hingham	103.00
9.	„	A friend, for India mission	2.00
10.	„	Society in Newport, R.I., additional (in all $125.00)	20.00
10.	„	Charles E. Whitwell, for Freedmen	5.00
14.	„	Society in Barnstable, including life membership for its pastor, Rev. Thomas Weston	40.00
14.	„	J. T. Cotton, as annual membership	1.00
15.	„	Society in Portsmouth, N.H., for Monthly Journals	13.00
16.	„	A friend at Mattapan, Dorchester	20.00
16.	„	H. H. Soule, Philadelphia, Penn.	3.00
17.	„	Society in Lowell, including life memberships for Rev. Charles E. Grinnell, Rev. Horatio Wood, John F. Kimball, Mrs. John F. Kimball, Mrs. Charles B. Coburn, and James K. Fellows	500.00
18.	„	Society in Taunton	200.00
18.	„	„ „ Dighton	100.00
18.	„	„ „ Fair Haven	70.00
18.	„	Rev. Joshua Young's Society, Hingham, additional (in all $108.00)	5.00
18.	„	Friends in Wayland	15.00
19.	„	Society in Lancaster, Mass.	300.00
21.	„	A lady in Brookline	40.00
21.	„	Society in Leominster	153.00
21.	„	„ „ Newport, R.I., additional	1.00
22.	„	Rev. Dr. Bartol's Society, Boston, additional (in all $1,151.00)	40.00